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Calendar.

CALENDAR WITH LESSONS.

SUNDAY	MORNING				EVENING			
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Nov. 17	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Nov. 18	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Nov. 19	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Nov. 20	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Nov. 21	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Nov. 22	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Nov. 23	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Nov. 24	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Nov. 25	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Nov. 26	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Nov. 27	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Nov. 28	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Nov. 29	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Nov. 30	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th

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Religious Miscellany.

A DEFENCE

Of the Constitution of the Diocese of Vermont, in reply to the strictures of the Episcopal Recorder. By JOHN H. HOPKINS, D. D., L. L. D., Bishop of Vermont.

THE EPISCOPAL VETO.

And now I turn to the last charge, of converting "a distinguished layman into an automaton" by the magic of our Conventional system. It is the first time that I have heard this anecdote. The anecdote is anonymous, and the witness is anonymous. But yet I think it very possible that the story is true, because it would be quite unreasonable to doubt that "distinguished layman" may talk a little nonsense now and then, so long as there are distinguished clergymen to set them the example. It must be perfectly obvious, however, that if the speech thus reported meant anything at all, it could only mean that the gentleman found himself disappointed of his desire to display his oratory, or "make a sensation," for which I have already stated that our Vermont Convention is by no means a favorable field. Certain it is, indeed, that every member of that body has an equal liberty of thought and speech, subject only to the usual rules of order. Certain it is, that in its proper place none can honor his name more than we do. But in the Convention of our Diocese the forensic orator soon feels himself reduced to the general level, because there is no public auditory, and no theatre of display, and we are accustomed to listen, not to flights of rhetoric, but to plain, straightforward sense, directed by duty, and governed by kindness. I have lived long, and have had as much to do as most men in Conventional proceedings, and truth compels me to say that I have never known a Convention of the Church to be interesting on account of its oratorical debates, unless when there was a sharp contention of opposing parties, often dangerous, always hostile to religious influence in the community, and not seldom discredit to the speakers themselves. If, therefore, I had the honor of being acquainted with our correspondent's "distinguished layman," I should say to him that, although his eloquence might have been good, fraternal peace and unity were better. I am far from wishing any man to be an automaton, but yet, for myself, if I must make a choice between them, I would infinitely rather be an automaton in the Church of God than run the risk of being an incendiary.

You will remember, gentlemen, I trust, that I am not a volunteer on this occasion. I have been long accustomed to bear the assaults of the press with quiet good humor, that this kind of patience with me has become a habit rather than a virtue, and I should not have given myself the trouble of repelling this last attack upon my Diocese, if the welfare of the Church, beyond the limits of Vermont, had not impelled me. I grant, indeed, that my official sphere is small. I admit that we are not a numerous or a wealthy people, and that we have neither large salaries nor large churches to attract the stars of the ecclesiastical firmament. But I do not admit that our system involves any principle which shrinks from fair investigation. Nor have we any reason to refuse to judge it by its fruits, although it must be acknowledged that there is no Diocese in our land which presents a harder soil for the growth of Episcopacy.

Under that system, our clergy have increased in twenty-one years from eleven to twenty-five, without a dollar of missionary aid beyond our own borders. Our Church edifices have grown from sixteen to twenty-eight, besides two rebuilt, one much enlarged, and many others improved and adorned, with

Concluded.

no debts of any serious consequence. While our parsonages, from none, have reached the number of seven, with several more in a train towards consummation.

Under that system, our ministers, who, when I entered upon my office, in A. D. 1832, bore the proportion of one to every 25,000 of the population in the State of Vermont, now bear the proportion of one to every 12,000. This is a larger proportion than that of your own Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Virginia, North Carolina, and other older Dioceses, and it is considerably beyond the general average throughout the Union.

Under that system, the Diocese, which was at first nearly divided between High and Low Church differences, with a large amount of irregularity, and a plentiful supply of the elements of contention, and which afterwards passed through a period of partial trouble from Tractarianism, has been marked, for many years, by uniform propriety and order, freed from all dissension, and taught to appreciate the real advantages of brotherly concord and peace.—There is not at this moment a single root of bitterness or strife from one end of it to the other. The lines of party-spirit are all merged in the Unity of the Church.

With this experience of the results, you will not, I trust, be greatly surprised that we are somewhat reluctant to go to school, or to take our knowledge of the true Constitution, principles, and history of the Church from my learned and eloquent friend, the Rev. Dr. Hawks, even though his notions are endorsed by the editors and correspondents of the *Episcopal Recorder*. Perhaps we may be mistaken in presuming to doubt that the largest cities must needs possess the wisest men. But I beg leave to assure you, that we shall require a much better display of authority and argument than we have yet seen to convince us of our error.

A few words more, and I have done. The Bishop of the Diocese of Vermont has no veto power. He does not vote at all in his Convention. He takes no part, direct or indirect, in the election of Church officers. He has no control of any funds, missionary or otherwise, to distribute among his supposed or real favorites. Nor is he under the slightest temptation to employ any management whatever, either to secure a Conventional triumph, or avoid a Conventional defeat. And why? Because the CONSTITUTION OF THE DIOCESE fixes his just rights on their true basis, and he can afford to be perfectly impartial.

I do not say that any other Bishop takes a different course; but I do say that the defective and inconsistent position which the Constitutions of the older Dioceses assign to them, has a natural tendency to make them managers. And I say further, that the Church papers on both sides (with a few honorable exceptions) have been very improperly and unhappily in the habit of imputing to many of these Bishops a large amount of management, and of exciting on this very ground, no small measure of odium against them. If those accusations were true, which I trust they are not, the blame should be cast not so much on the Bishops themselves, as on an erroneous and unjust Conventional system, which deprives them of their official rights, and thus tempts them to secure *by management*, what ought to be conceded to them *by law*. The inevitable consequence is, in but for many instances, that instead of being regarded with the same confidence and affection by all belonging to their Diocese, they are regarded as being in sympathy and conduct, the *Bishops of a party*.

But what possible advantage to truth and piety can be gained by a state of things like this? How much more useful and happy would be the relation of Bishops to their Dioceses if their true places were universally declared and understood? For in no other way can the essential principles of our Church unity be realized effectually. In no other way can the clergy and laity, joined heart and hand in *one body with their ecclesiastical head*, under Christ, go on, like a well-ordered army, to the warfare with the world, flesh, and the devil. These mutual dissensions—this carping and censorious work of strife—this tone of alarm about the despotic powers of the Episcopate—this overbearing spirit of opposition—what can be more injurious to the

progress of the Gospel! What more sure to obstruct the march of truth! Nay, what so likely to force the Bishops into the ranks of partisans, however strongly they might deprecate such a position!

I am far from claiming, for myself or my brethren, any immunity from justice, where there is a real and substantial ground for complaint. If Bishops prove to be unsound in the faith, or unsound in the morals of religion, let them be presented, tried and condemned, with a severity proportioned to the importance of their office. But let this be done with the grave caution which belongs to Christian discipline, on due enquiry, and credible evidence. And meanwhile, I pray you to remember that we are men, of like sympathies and feelings with our brethren. Remember that the clergy may do at least as much to influence the character of a Bishop, as he can do to influence theirs. Remember that it is their place and privilege to be the counsellors and advisers of their ecclesiastical Overseer, to warn him in season, with the affection and faithfulness of a younger brother, when they think him in error, instead of publishing his mistakes, under an anonymous signature, to the world, and making them the pretext of party opposition. The spirit of the Gospel is LOVE. And love produces love; confidence produces confidence; frankness produces frankness, all by the same strong impulse of generous sympathy. And the working of the contrary elements is just as sure. Distrust produces distrust; suspicion produces suspicion; enmity produces enmity. The ministers of Christ know full well, indeed, that His effectual grace should gain the victory over these temptations, and that it is their bounden duty to overcome evil with good. But sad experience proves how easy it is to cover the feelings of the natural heart with the convenient robe of theological fidelity, and then to indulge them with bitter intolerance, FOR THE SAKE OF GOD!

Were it possible, therefore, for my feeble voice to reach the clergy of the whole Church, I would say to them, "My Reverend brethren, you have the course of your Bishops, to a very large extent, in your own care and keeping. If you would have a faithful, affectionate, and impartial Overseer in the Lord, select him, in the first place, with a view to these qualities, and you will rarely, if ever, be disappointed in the result. And when he is consecrated to his arduous office, give him, in all respects, as the Diocese of Vermont has done, his just rights in the Apostolic Consultation of the Church, and treat him with generous confidence and love. Believe that he cannot possibly have any interest in opposition to your own, that it is his earnest desire and prayer to see you all prosper in your labors, and that his highest earthly happiness must be found in your fraternal unity and concord. Advise and counsel him if you have occasion, and doubt not that he will receive it kindly, when it is done as it ought to be done, with the spirit of Christian tenderness.—Strengthen his hands by your faithful support. Consult him as your best friend. Set your faces against all doctrines and practices which the Church has not sanctioned, lest you should trouble the peace and harmony of Zion. Give no encouragement to party spirit, nor to party movements. And you may rely on it, as the general rule, that your Bishop will respond with joy to your efforts; that in proportion as you desire to do nothing without his approbation, it will be his wish to do nothing without yours, and that you will realize in feeling and in fact the true design of that beautiful system, which is too often held, in our degenerate day, as an impracticable theory. Then may your Diocese hope for its full reward, in the absence of dissension, in the enlargement of Christian love, and in the increasing favor of God and man. Then you will see the fraternal spirit of the ministry shed a wholesome and kindly influence upon the people. And you will know, by a blessed experience, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.

I may not close, however, although I am sensible of the inordinate length of my communication, without a due acknowledgment of your late editor's intended compliment. After assailing, with zeal and ingenuity, the constitutional system of my Diocese, he is pleased to say, that in my hands it may not be very dangerous. But this is a species of laudation which I must entirely disclaim. If, instead of